

claims.

1 What is claimed is:

2 1. A communication assistance system comprising:

3 a first database having a plurality of listings therein, each of said listings

4 having at least one contact name and a corresponding contact number;

5 a switching device for receiving calls from a plurality of users desiring to
6 access said listings;

7 an operator terminal configured to receive said communication from said
8 switching device and retrieve a listing from said first database;

9 a first route for handling telephone communications between said
10 operator terminal and said user; and

11 a second route having an out-of band processor configured to receive
12 information corresponding to call completion information and to provide call
13 completion data to said switching device for completing said call between said
14 user and said requested listing.

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16 2. The communication assistance system according to claim 1,

17 wherein said out-of band processor, may be configured to deliver said call

18 completion data to said switch so as to allow call completion via a plurality of

19 formats including any one of SMS (Short Message Service), WAP (Wireless

20 Application Process) and HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol).

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22 3. The communication assistance system according to claim 2,

23 wherein any one of said formats for delivering said requested listing to said user

24 can be set to a default format by said user.

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4. The communication assistance system according to claim 2,
wherein any one of said formats for delivering said requested listing to said user
can be set to a default format by said communication assistance system.

5. A communication assistance system comprising:
a first database having a plurality of listings therein, each of said listings
having at least one contact name and a corresponding contact number;
a switching device for receiving calls from a plurality of users desiring to
access said listings; and
an operator terminal having a search screen, wherein said search screen
maintains a plurality of search windows, each of which configured to enter a
search term to search for listings contained in said first database, said operator
terminal further configured to receive said communication from said switching
device and retrieve a listing from said first database using said search screen.

6. The communication assistance system according to claim 5,
wherein said search screen maintains a field restriction window configured to
restrict the search to a field in said first database.

7. The communication assistance system according to claim 5,
wherein said search screen is selected among said plurality of search screens
based on the number dialed by said user to reach said communication assistance
system.

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8. The communication assistance system according to claim 5,
wherein said search screen is displayed in the language preferred by said user.

9. The communication assistance system according to claim 5,
wherein said search screen is selected among said plurality of search screens
based on the service provider of said user.

10. The communication assistance system according to claim 9,
wherein said search screen for said service provider maintains an introduction
message to be read to said user by the operator at said operator terminal.

11. The communication assistance system according to claim 10,
wherein said introduction message is changed, such that said change is
automatically updated to all of said operator terminals in said communication
assistance system.

12. The communication assistance system according to claim 5,
wherein said search screen maintains an indication of the geographic location of
said user.

13. The communication assistance system according to claim 12,
wherein said geographic location of said user is provided by said user.

1 14. The communication assistance system according to claim 12,
2 wherein said geographic location of said user is provided by an auto location
3 system.

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5 15. The communication assistance system according to claim 12,
6 wherein said search screen at said operator terminal is configured to search for
7 listings based on a proximity operation, wherein the listings retrieved from said
8 first database are retrieved based on the listings closest to the geographic
9 location of the user.

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11 16. A communication assistance system comprising:
12 a first database having a plurality of listings therein, each of said listings
13 having at least one contact name and a corresponding contact number;
14 a switching device for receiving calls from a plurality of users desiring to
15 access said listings; and
16 an operator terminal displaying a first search screen among a plurality of
17 search screens, wherein said search screen is selected among said plurality of
18 search screen based on a predefined criteria, said operator terminal configured to
19 receive said communication from said switching device and retrieve a listing
20 from said first database using said selected search screen.

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22 17. The communication assistance system as claimed in claim 16,
23 wherein said predefined criteria, for selecting said search screen from said
24 plurality of search screens, is the service provider of said user.

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2 18. The communication assistance system as claimed in claim 17,
3 wherein said predefined criteria, for selecting said search screen from said
4 plurality of search screens, is based on different searching options,
5 corresponding to directory options offered by said service provider of said user.

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7 19. The communication assistance system according to claim 18,
8 wherein said search screen for said service provider maintains an introduction
9 message to be read to said user by the operator at said operator terminal.

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11 20. The communication assistance system as claimed in claim 19,
12 wherein said introduction message is stored as recorded audio file to be played
13 when said user contacts said communication assistance system.

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15 21. The communication assistance system as claimed in claim 17,
16 wherein said search screen, for said service provider provides a special features
17 options, corresponding to special features offered by said service provider.

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19 22. The communication assistance system as claimed in claim 21,
20 wherein said special features options include any one of, movie ticket sales, and
21 restaurant listings.

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23 23. The communication assistance system as claimed in claim 16,
24 wherein said search screen is displayed in the language preferred by said user.

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2 24. The communication assistance system according to claim 16,
3 wherein said search screen maintains an indication of the geographic location of
4 said user.

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6 25. The communication assistance system according to claim 24,
7 wherein said geographic location of said user is provided by said user.

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9 26. The communication assistance system according to claim 24,
10 wherein said geographic location of said user is provided by an auto location
11 system.

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13 27. The communication assistance system according to claim 24,
14 wherein said search screen at said operator terminal is configured to search for
15 listings based on a proximity operation, wherein the listings retrieved from said
16 first database are retrieved based on the listings closest to the geographic
17 location of the user.

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19 28. The communication assistance system according to claim 26,
20 wherein said search screen at said operator terminal is configured to provide a
21 directions search for said user, wherein said starting position is automatically
22 entered by said auto-location system.

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24 29. The communication assistance system according to claim 28,

- 1 wherein said directions search is recalculated along said route each time said
- 2 user contacts said communications assistance system.